fighting and warfare are reduced when the available women carry on affairs. Thus, I conclude that any factor which increases the sexual activity of females or increases the female/male ratio reduces the frequency of fighting.

The second conclusion I reach is that Yanomamö marriage practices can be predicted, in a broad sense, once the conditions of warfare are specified. The greater the intensity of warfare, the more marriage practice will deviate from the preferred types. This follows from the fact that the Yanomamö are forced to base military alliances on exchanges of women, limiting the degree to which ideal marriage preferences are expressed in practice.

We may now turn to a more theoretical discussion. Writing on the functional significance of marriage ties, Leach (1957) drew attention to the importance of economic factors in the integration of affinally-linked corporate descent groups, concluding that such integration as did occur was due largely to the delayed payment of bride price. The existence of this debt had the effect of consolidating the weak affinal ties, for the debtor group was economically bound to the bride-giving group. Although it has been shown above that the solidary ties between any affinally-linked Yanomamö descent groups are due largely to military, marital and economic obligations, the problem of the lack of solidarity between agnatically related descent groups has not been satisfactorily explained. The instability of relationships between agnatic Yanomamö corporate descent groups can be reduced to

121 58 602 613 two major structural problems: the lack of corporate functions of the local descent groups due to the nature of the corporation's estate, and the ambiguous nature of agnatic kinship ties. Within a framework such as this, affinal ties are capable of promoting solidarity between corporate groups because marriages among the Yanomamö are political alliances that involve military obligations. Local descent groups enter into marriage alliances to advance their military status; the context, therefore, within which marriages are contracted decidely influences the relationships between the corporate groups in question.

121 The debate between Fortes and Leach arose out of the interpretation of the importance of matrilateral kinship ties in patrilineal societies, as these ties are the focal points in any analysis of the means by which solidarity is achieved between corporate descent groups. Briefly, Fortes maintained that the solidarity between lineal descent groups was ultimately due to the inherent tendency of kinship to promote amity. Leach, on the other hand, argues that such an analysis confuses affinal relationships with descent and fails to take notice of the effects of the economic and political contexts within which marriages take place.

Leach drew attention to the fact that ethnological perspectives developed from analyses of patrilineal societies such as the Nuer, Tiv, and Tallensi have biased later workers to focus their attention on lineal corporations and on the common descent ties between corporations when they analyse